P780187-0021
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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FADRC
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December 13, 1978

Dear Mr. Rudd:

I have been asked to respond to your letter to the President of November 27 requesting information about the U.S. response to the Guyana tragedy.

On Sunday, November 19, it had become clear that the United States Government was facing a major crisis in Guyana. An American Congressman and other Americans in his party had been killed. A settlement believed to include over 1,000 Americans was involved, and its situation was uncertain. It was apparent that the Government of Guyana required assistance in handling a major emergency created by the presence of Americans within its borders.

The President, acting under his constitutional authority as Chief Executive and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, ordered the departments of our government to take action to deal with this emergency. The operational decisions within the U.S. Government in this unique situation were made by the Secretary of State in conjunction with some of his Cabinet colleagues.

Under the President's Executive authorities, medical evacuation for injured Americans was immediately ordered, and the United States Government offered assistance to the Government of Guyana to prevent further loss of life.

The Honorable
Eldon Rudd,
House of Representatives.

As events progressed, it became clear that there were large numbers of Americans dead. For a time, it was believed that there were survivors in the jungle; and the United States adjusted and increased its assistance to help the search by Guyana police and military. Finally, when the full scope of the tragedy of Jonestown was clear, our Government was requested by the Government of Guyana to remove the bodies. This operation was considered essential in handling the emergency situation which existed in Guyana at the time.

The Justice Department is fully exploring possible legal remedies which can be used to recover the cost the U.S. Government has incurred in removing and processing the bodies of Americans from Guyana. Now that the emergency is substantially over, the Office of Management and Budget and other agencies are reviewing the various operations to determine the exact cost to the United States Government. Although the costs to the United States Government of an effort of this magnitude obviously are considerable, they are substantially lower than the $8 million figure used in some press reports. Please be assured that we will report fully to appropriate congressional committees on these aspects of the operation upon completion of our review. Meanwhile, the Justice Department will make all efforts to recover the costs to the U. S. Government.

No consideration is being given in the Federal Government to relocate or provide support to Jonestown survivors. If they require funds for onward travel to their homes after arrival in the United States, they are provided the necessary transportation by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare against a signed undertaking of later reimbursement. If later they are without funds, they may of course be eligible for state or local assistance.

If you have any further questions, you may wish to contact Deputy Assistant Secretary John Bushnell in our Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, whose telephone number is 632-8562.

Sincerely,

DB/GW

Douglas J. Bennet, Jr.
Assistant Secretary for
Congressional Relations

Drafted: ARA/CAR:RZImmermann:lm
12/13/78 x 29447 # 181-0023

Clearances: Inter-Agency
ARA:GLister
ARA:JABushnell
H:ENef
EN/GW

ELDON RUDD
4TH DISTRICT, ARIZONA

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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-3361

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6009 FEDERAL BUILDING
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85025
(602) 261-4803

P780187-0024

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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TRANSPORTATION,
AVIATION, AND WEATHER
SPACE SCIENCE AND APPLICATIONS

November 27
1978

Ack. FM/State

CONGRESSIONAL
LIAISON

DEC 1 1978

Honorable Jimmy Carter
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I want to protest in the strongest possible terms the Federal Government's use of taxpayer dollars to pay for the return and burial of bodies of the Soviet-oriented People's Temple cultists from Jonestown, Guyana.

Certainly a U.S. Government effort was in order to identify U.S. citizens in Guyana by some logical means, such as fingerprints, and to work with Guyana's government to offset any expenses incurred in the investigation of this incident involving U.S. citizens and the murder of a distinguished Member of Congress.

However, it is my belief that the commune's apparent large amount of money intended to relocate the group in the Soviet Union should be used to pay for the return and disposal of bodies now underway, rather than imposing another unwarranted burden upon the taxpayers. The surviving relatives should be asked to assume expenses involving their own family members, and the People's Temple in California should be made to reimburse the Government for the remaining costs.

There are reports of a Federal Government plan to give each of the Jonestown survivors an amount of money to relocate to a place of their choice. I hope that such reports are untrue. There is no justification for such Government support, and I would also strongly protest this action.

The people I have talked to, and those who have written to me about this tragedy, are appalled by the reprehensible nature of this Jonestown commune and its anti-American Marxist lifestyle, which is so disrespectful of individual freedom, responsibility, and dignity.

SU02

Rather than give public support to the survivors of this commune, for whatever reason, I would hope that you and other leaders of our Nation would publicly condemn the Jonestown cult and its radical philosophy that resulted in the tragic and senseless mass murder in Guyana.

It is respectfully requested that I be furnished an itemized accounting of U.S. expenditures in connection with this matter, and the specific budget accounts that are the source of Federal funds for all Government activities in connection with the Jonestown incident.

Your response will be appreciated with great respect.

Sincerely,

Eldon Rudd
Member of Congress

ER:aa

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ID DOS 781206052 THE WHITE HOUSE OFFICE

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REFERRAL

ACTIC is assigni ARA

TO: DOS DATE: DEC 06 78

REPLY: DIRECT REPLY. FURNISH INFORMATION COPY

IF MORE THAN 9 DAYS DELAY IS ENCOUNTERED PLEASE TELEPHONE MS. BYRNE 456-2113

BASIC CORRESPONDENCE AND CONTROL SHEET AND COPY OF RESPONSE (OR DRAFT) MUST BE RETURNED TO: AGENCY LIAISON (ROOM 94) WHITE HOUSE.

REMARKS: DIRECT REPLY TO CONGRESSMAN WITH INFO COPY TO W.H. CONGRESSIONAL LIAISON, 198 EOB

E. SMALL REFERRAL

X LETTER MAILGRAM TELEGRAM DATED: NOV 27 78

TO: PRESIDENT CARTER

FROM: THE HON. ELDON RUDD, U.S. HOUSE OF REP.

SUBJECT: REQUESTS INFO ON U.S. EXPENDITURES FOR RETURNING BODIES TO U.S. FROM GUYANA.

RESPONSE:

CLOSED OUT:

BY DIRECTION OF THE PRESIDENT:

PAMELA ZINN

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF CORRESPONDENCE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
1978 DEC 8 AM 9 51
FAURC
DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

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